

## **Complaints, Compliments, and Comments Policy**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction about the actions or behavior of others connected with Birmingham LGBT (BLGBT) and its work”.

Birmingham LGBT welcomes complaints compliments and comments and view them as a positive way of improving our level of service. The Complaints Procedure is open to anyone who is, or who has been involved with, or in receipt of a service from Birmingham LGBT e.g. Stakeholders, staff, volunteers, Board members, funders, professional and other agencies.

### **Recording of Complaints**

All complaints, written or verbal, should be recorded in a Complaints Book at the time of receipt. Outcomes and any changes in working practices should be written in the Complaints Book as soon as the investigation is completed.

The complaints book should be kept in a safe place within the office and open to inspection –

Pages should not be removed from the Complaints Book. If pages are removed from the Complaints Book this may result in disciplinary proceedings.

### **Procedure**

Anonymous complaints will be investigated as far as the amount of information given allows.

The complainant and anyone complained about will be kept informed throughout the process of the progress of the complaint.

Information about how to make a complaint, including this policy, will be made available to anyone who may wish to complain.

Complaints will be handled confidentially at every stage in accordance with Birmingham LGBT's Confidentiality policy.

### Step One

**Ideally a complaint should be made within six weeks of the occurrence of the incident. Complaints may be made after a longer time has elapsed although it may be harder to establish the facts and gather a full picture of the events in order to resolve the complaint satisfactorily.**

The person receiving the complaint needs to establish whether a complaint is being made or just a comment. All efforts will be made to assist a complainant in resolving the complaint informally, prior to initiation of the formal Complaints Procedure.

The complaint may be verbally or in writing and may be given to any member of staff. If, after discussing it with the staff member, the complainant feels satisfied, the complaint need go no further, although the statistics around the number of such complaints will be recorded for future reference in the Complaint Book.

If the complainant alleges misconduct by staff then disciplinary procedures may be commenced after the complaint has been investigated in line with the disciplinary policy.

### Step Two

If the complaint cannot be resolved in an initial conversation with a member of staff at step one, the complaint should be put in writing within seven working days of the initial response, and signed by the complainant. This may be done by the person themselves or by someone acting on their behalf, and should be sent to the Line Manager. The complainant will receive written acknowledgement of the letter of complaint within seven working days. The complaint will be investigated as a matter of urgency by the Investigating Officer, who will normally be the Line Manager, but could be a member of the Board if the complaint is about the Director or a member of the Board. The Board will be informed of the complaint at this stage.

### Step Three

The investigating officer will interview the complainant, the person about whom the complaint has been made, and any other relevant witnesses, face to face or by telephone, and will record all interviews in writing, signed by the interviewee where possible .

An advocate or supporter may accompany the complainant. A brief summary, together with the investigating officer's conclusions, and the written statement, will be prepared and submitted to the Board. The report should include any recommendations for improvements to the level of service for consideration by the Board.

#### Step Four

A written response will be given to the complainant within 20 working days of the written complaint being received. All parties will receive a copy of the written response. The complainant's letter will include details of the appeals procedure.

#### Step Five

If the complainant feels that the Line Manager/Director r/Board Member has not satisfactorily dealt with the complaint, appeals against the response can be accepted within 14 working days of the decision. Appeals should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board, who will acknowledge receipt of the appeal. A response will be given to the complainant in writing within 28 days. All parties will receive a copy of the written response.

A complainant has the right to independent advice from an outside source, such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau, a Law Centre, Birmingham City Council Equalities and Diversity Division or a Solicitor as appropriate.